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September 28, 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

EIU INTERNATIONAL AND MINORITY STUDENT ENROLLMENT UP

CHARLESTON, IL--The Eastern Illinois University campus is becoming more culturally diverse as is reflected in a significant increase in the number of international and minority students enrolled this fall compared to last.

International student enrollment is up 26 percent over last year, with the largest population of students from the People's Republic of China, Japan, India and Taiwan.

Eastern also experienced a 6 percent increase in the number of minority students enrolled this fall, with significant growth in the number of Hispanics and Asians.

International student enrollment stands at 108 students, compared to 86 a year ago, while minority enrollment is 784 students or 7.3 percent of the total on-campus enrollment. A year ago the total was 738 students, or 7.1 percent of the enrollment.

The most significant increase in ethnic minorities is in the number of Hispanics, with 155 enrolled this year compared to 115 a year ago. The Asian population also grew from 66 last year to 79 this year.

Lou Hencken, EIU vice president for student affairs, said, "We are pleased to see an increase in minority and international

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students. Learning to live with people of different cultures is an important part of a university education. We are particularly gratified to see the positive results of our admissions office recruiting efforts."

Johnetta Jones, director of minority affairs at Eastern, commented, "We are delighted with the growing number of Asian and Hispanic students because it demonstrates our continued commitment to creating a culturally diverse campus. Because of this diversity, students will leave here better prepared to live in the 21st century in a multicultural and multiethnic environment."

"We have been able to achieve greater diversity through our increased recruiting and retention efforts," she added.

Jones said many of the minority students who enroll at Eastern have attended the university's summer leadership camps and Partnerships for Excellence program which encourage bright minority students to go to college.

"These programs give students exposure to a college environment and allow them to take classes for college credit. Many of them choose to enroll here later because they are already familiar with the Eastern campus and its academic programs. Once they are here, they seem pleased with Eastern and stay," Jones said.

Another program that has been particularly successful in retaining students is Eastern's Peer Helper program where new freshmen and transfer students are teamed up with upperclassmen who help them make an easier transition into college.

Brigitte Chen, international student advisor at Eastern,

attributes the growing number of international students to several factors, particularly economic conditions in Japan and, recently, the People's Republic of China.

She said, "Education in these countries is highly valued. Families are prepared to make sacrifices for an American college degree," Chen said.

Chen added that some students come to Eastern because the university offers an intensive English program during the spring and summer, which better prepares them for their academic program studies in the fall.

Others come to Eastern simply because family or friends have attended the university. Some are referred to Eastern by foreign universities and agencies whose staffs work closely with Chen to place students.

"And then there are some who come to Eastern because they have read about the institution in brochures or catalogs," Chen commented.

Last year Eastern received more than 2,000 inquiries from international students interested in studying at Eastern.

"A large percentage of those who actually do come to Eastern stay here through graduation," said Chen.

She credits the high retention rate in part to the high caliber of students who enroll, Eastern's personal touch, the community's openness to international students, students' satisfaction with the university's academic programs and support services.

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Chen said year-round orientation programs are held for international students, as are a variety of social activities, such as a monthly international tea, where EIU support services staff are often the featured speakers.

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